



Agriculture Emergency Responder Training (AgERT)



Course Goals and Description

Course Goals

- Provide APHIS employees the essential knowledge and skills necessary to safely and effectively respond to a WMD incident or an agricultural disease emergency,
- Provide opportunity for APHIS emergency responders to learn, practice, and sharpen skills alongside other emergency responders,
- Teach APHIS emergency responders how to work within the NIMS/ICS framework,
- Provide emergency response training that is current and consistent with USDA – APHIS policies and procedures,
- Comply with Homeland Security Presidential Directives Nos. 5 through 9, and
- Provide personal protective equipment (PPE) training in accordance with OSHA Regulations and APHIS Safety and Health requirements.

Course Description

The AgERT course is the product of an ongoing collaborative partnership between USDA and DHS to enhance national preparedness for acts of agricultural terrorism. Together with the colleges of veterinary medicine at Auburn University and Tuskegee University, the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), and the DHS Office for Domestic Preparedness' Center for Domestic Preparedness (CDP), the AgERT course delivers the best available hands-on emergency preparedness and response training for agricultural responders. This unique working relationship is one of several initiatives in progress to improve USDA's emergency readiness to defend



America's agriculture and food system against terrorist attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies, in accordance with Homeland Security Presidential Directives.

The AgERT course will provide you with a unique opportunity to learn and practice with peers from across APHIS (Animal Care, Plant Protection and Quarantine, Veterinary Services, Wildlife Services, and Inspection and Enforcement Services), as well as with emergency responders from state and local



emergency management agencies and the tribal community. A major goal of the Basic AgERT course is to sharpen your ability to recognize, react and recover from a WMD incident or agriculture disease emergency.

You will gain valuable knowledge and experience in the following areas:

- APHIS Safety and Health
- National Incident Management System/Incident Command System and APHIS Emergency Response
- WMD Awareness
- Introduction to Chemical, Ordinance, Biological, and Radiological Agents (COBRA)
- Biosecurity and Decontamination
- FAD Investigation Procedures and Crime Scene Preservation
- Critical Stress Management
- PPE (Selecting, Donning, Doffing, and Wearing PPE during a simulated Ag emergency)
- Sampling and Monitoring

Prior to attending the AgERT course, participants are required to obtain medical clearance and receive respirator fit testing. See the “Pre-Course Requirements and Recommendations” links for additional information.